

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, June 17, 2015, to meet with Fieldstone Properties/Franklin Park.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:01 p.m. The meeting was held in the Multipurpose Room of Springhill Lake Elementary School.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan. Councilmember Konrad E. Herling was ill and unable to attend.

STAFF PRESENT: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; Celia Craze, Director of Planning and Community Development; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

FIELDSTONE PROPERTIES REPRESENTATIVES: Joe Kazarnovsky, Ralph Reider, Gail Comfort, Lea Garcia, Aaron Martin, Crystal Cornish, Denise Knight, and Angela Johnson.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Brian Gibbons, Advisory Planning Board; Amanda Brozana, Greenbelt News Review; Melva Moscaso, Bill Orleans, Bonita Jackson, Paul Waters, Briana Shaw, Kathleen Shaw and Elizabeth Hall.

Mr. Kazarnovsky, Owner/Managing Partner of Fieldstone Properties, provided an update on Franklin Park. He reported that 2,100 of the 2,877 units have been upgraded (kitchens, bathrooms, flooring), two pools on the property were now in full operation, and a campaign had started to renovate building breezeways and also improve landscaping throughout the development. Mr. Kazarnovsky said 92.5 percent of units are occupied and they currently retain approximately 65 percent of tenants. He also commented on the success of the Fitness Center.

Mayor Jordan asked if any consideration had been given to providing a room for community gatherings within Franklin Park. Mr. Kazarnovsky said all available space is being fully utilized at this time.

Mr. Kazarnovsky said that Franklin Park has an excellent working relationship with the City, especially the Code Enforcement and Police Departments. Mayor Jordan thanked Franklin Park for the installation of the new pathway and lights behind the Springhill Lake Recreation Center, its continued partnership on a police officer and its support of the recent Police Department Reaccreditation.

Mayor Jordan provided an update of the possible relocation of the FBI Headquarters to Greenbelt, noting that a decision on a site (Greenbelt, Landover or Springfield) is expected by early next year. He also said that new home sales in Greenbelt Station are going very well and construction on Phase II and the apartment building is underway.

Ms. Pope asked about military housing at Franklin Park. Ms. Johnson said she has a meeting scheduled with representatives from the military to determine Franklin Park's status on the eligible military housing list. She added that several military families reside in Franklin Park but said they had secured housing on their own.

Ms. Pope asked if Franklin Park distributed a newsletter for the residents. Mr. Kazarnovsky said management currently has over 3,000 email addresses for residents and they have found email communications to be the most successful and most environmentally friendly way to communicate with residents.

Mr. Putens spoke of the success of public/private partnerships and asked whether Franklin Park would be willing to partner with the City on a dog park for Greenbelt West. Mr. Kazarnovsky said they would be willing to explore the idea. In response to a question from Ms. Mach, Mr. Kazarnovsky said they would welcome a child-care partnership opportunity.

Ms. Davis reported on a complaint about residents not receiving advance notice when water is turned off to their units. Mr. Martin, Maintenance Director, said residents are notified of all scheduled renovation or maintenance work that will cause any water disruption. He mentioned that they are normally unable to provide advanced notification during emergency situations.

Ms. Davis said she had been informed from residents about high water bills assessed to the individual units. Mr. Kazarnovsky explained the formula utilized by Franklin Park for assessing the unit charges based on the monthly usage fees from the ten meters throughout the property. He said that 30% of the entire water bill is used for the pool and general property upkeep and only 70% of the bill was passed on to the residents. Mr. Putens and Ms. Pope commented that the water fees assessed per unit are higher than they currently pay as homeowners.

Mayor Jordan asked about recycling in Franklin Park. Mr. Martin said there were six large recycling containers on the property, one in each section. Ms. Johnson advised that there had been additional recycling bins throughout the property but they had to be removed due to high contamination rates. Kathleen Shaw, 5906 Cherrywood Terrace #203, suggested a resident committee be formed to promote recycling. Ms. Knight, Director of Resident Services, said she would discuss the idea further with Ms. Shaw. Ms. Davis and Mr. Putens said the City's Sustainability Coordinator would be able to provide assistance with this idea.

Ms. Mach and Ms. Pope asked if Franklin Park continued to provide window guards to residents. Ms. Garcia said Franklin Park had changed from window guards to window locks. She said the locks are offered to residents when they move in the units. Ms. Pope noted the importance of the locks and suggested that the option be very clearly explained to all new residents. Mr. Putens asked if Franklin Park inspects balconies on the units. Mr. Martin said yes, both when residents move out of the units and during the annual inspection.

Mayor Jordan and Brian Gibbons, Chair of the Advisory Planning Board (APB), said APB has several upcoming meetings with Greenbelt Station Developers and invited representatives of Franklin Park to attend.

Elizabeth Hall, 9322 Edmonston Road #104, reported that she had a recent flood in her unit and Franklin Park personnel had been uncooperative and unresponsive to her needs for assistance and unit repairs. She also reported that her visual smoke alarm had not been installed properly by management and was not working. Mr. Kazarnovsky said he was not sure of the details of Ms. Hall's complaints, but apologized and said maintenance staff would be in touch with her. Celia Craze, Director of Planning and Community Development, said she would send a City Inspector out to meet with Ms. Hall also.

Ms. Davis asked if visual smoke alarms were provided for all hearing impaired residents. Mr. Martin said yes, if requested by the resident. He said management was aware of five hearing impaired residents.

Amanda Brozana, 9336 Edmonston Road #302, reported that there was a lack of communication between Franklin Park and its residents, specifically regarding scheduled unit repairs and available services. She also commented that management does not give residents an appropriate level of respect, noting the lack of social space within the Franklin Park area for community gatherings and the limited recycling opportunities. Mr. Kazarnovsky disagreed and spoke of the steps taken by management to improve Franklin Park in order to provide the residents an attractive and community oriented living experience.

In response to a question from Mayor Jordan, Ms. Craze said that the number of code complaints received by the City for Franklin Park have significantly decreased over the past few years. She estimated the City receives about 180 code complaints per year and said the response by Franklin Park management is quite satisfactory. Ms. Craze added that Inspector Mathews had just completed his annual inspection of the property.

Ms. Knight said the new calendar for Franklin Park is being finalized and announced several upcoming events including a pool party, the National Night Out event and Franklin Park Day. Ms. Davis requested that the information be shared with the City for inclusion on the Community Calendar. She also asked that City information be included in Franklin Park publications.

Council thanked the representatives for attending.

The meeting ended at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*